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ART. II.—*Memoirs of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.*  
Svo. pp. 228. Philadelphia. McCarty & Davis.

It was said by Lord Bacon, that ‘nothing is so seldom found among the writings of men, as true and perfect civil history.’ This remark is as pertinent at the present day, as it was in the time of Bacon. There would seem to have been no essential improvements on the models of the ancients, in the art of writing history, and Herodotus may still be cited as standing at the head of the first rank of historians, as Homer of the poets, and Demosthenes of the orators. The voice of ages has been as unanimous in favor of the one as the others, notwithstanding the discourteous criticisms of Plutarch on the writings of Herodotus.

To inquire into the reasons, why historical compositions have not been improved by the moderns, would lead us away from our present purpose. It is enough to admit the fact, and assent to the truth of Bacon’s proposition. In this respect history stands on the same footing, as poetry and eloquence, architecture and sculpture. Lucian tells of a certain historian of Corinth, who began his work by a formal argument to prove, that none but a wise man should attempt to write history. Were all historians to set out with this position, and gravely apply themselves to establish its truth, we should probably meet with fewer unsuccessful invocations of the historic muse, unless, like the same Corinthian author, each should think his own case sufficiently clear without proof. In his rules for an accomplished historian, Lucian mentions what he calls two grand qualifications, namely, a genius for political investigation, and a command of language, or a power of describing his thoughts with force and accuracy. The first, says Lucian, is a gift of nature, and a thing not to be taught. The second can be acquired by industry and emulation, by study and practice. The great historians have possessed both these qualifications. Their patience and labor have been equal to their genius. Herodotus spent years in travelling, observing, conversing with men of different nations, and polishing his compositions, before he ventured to submit his work to the critical ears of a Grecian audience. Froissart was a travelling chronicler, and he holds the first place in the department of history, which he cultivated. In short, a man without talents or industry may compose a wretched history, as he may be a dull

orator or poet. Genius in either case is a feeble flame, unless cherished by severe mental application ; and industry will plod in vain, when not quickened by some portion of the celestial fire.

Sometimes the historian fails, on account of his subject ; at other times, for the want of materials. It is not in the power of the greatest mind to make that dignified and interesting, which in its nature is low and unattractive. The first step to be taken by a historian, therefore, is to exercise his judgment in selecting a subject, which will not cause him to run the hazard of wasting his powers in developing and recording events, that have nothing in them to command the admiration, or awaken the sympathy of mankind. Next come the materials of history, and in no part of his task are the resolution, the patience, the ardor of the historian, more seriously tried than in collecting these. Some writers have avoided this burden of research, and proved themselves to be politicians, rather than historians. Xenophon related his own adventures, and Hume worked upon the stock of others. Herodotus, on the contrary, sought out the very fountain heads of knowledge with untiring diligence ; and Gibbon delved deeply and laboriously in the unproductive mines of the literature of the dark ages.

In applying these hints to our own country, we perceive no reason, why historical compositions of the highest order may not be written among us. There is no appalling deficiency of any one requisite, either in regard to writers, subjects, or materials. As to the first, to be sure, the best proof is a successful experiment ; and, if occasion required, we should not despair of establishing this proof with some degree of triumph, even from the present list of American historians ; although we confess, that no work approaching to the character of a complete history of America, or of the United States, or of the American Revolution, has yet appeared. Of the single states we have some respectable histories, rather of the narrative than the philosophical kind ; telling much of events, but little of causes and consequences ; describing the visible motions of the political machine, but hardly acquainting us with the springs that actuated it, or the mass it moved. These are valuable chiefly as materials, and indexes to materials, for future use, in composing a perfect colonial history. In glancing over this subject, however, nothing is more obvious, than the scattered and loose condition of all materials for history in the United States. So many dis-

inct governments existed in this country, from the time of its first settlement, that the records of events were not only very much multiplied, but widely diffused. In some cases they were never well preserved in the public offices, and at the Revolution there was a universal confusion. Important papers belonging to individuals were subject to similar accidents. Since that time many have been lost, and those which remain will gradually suffer the same fate, unless some special means shall be used to collect and preserve them.

To effect this end no better plan could be adopted, than that of societies in the several states expressly established for the purpose. Some of these societies have already been efficient and eminently serviceable. Twentyone volumes have been given to the public by the Massachusetts Historical Society, and one volume at least is annually published. By the New York Society three volumes have been printed, and we understand that a fourth may soon be expected from the press, comprising a second volume of Smith's History of New York, left by the author in manuscript. The library of this Society is valuable, and is well supplied with books on American history. It must not be concealed, however, that the objects of the Society do not seem to have been prosecuted recently with the same ardor and success, as at the beginning. The New Hampshire Society has begun to publish its collections, and a good deal is to be expected from that quarter. There is a Historical Society in Connecticut, but we do not learn that the public has as yet been favored with its contributions. We hope that gentlemen of leisure and inquiry in other states will shortly follow these examples, so honorable, and so well calculated to rescue from oblivion the memorials of the lofty spirit, the brave deeds, and the enduring fortitude of our fathers, who settled and subdued the land of our inheritance, and planted the seeds of liberty from which we are now enjoying an abundant and grateful harvest.

A new Society has been formed in Pennsylvania, with the design of collecting materials illustrating the history of that state; and in the volume before us, we have the first fruits of its labors. The specific objects of this Society, as set forth in the president's inaugural address, are comprehensive and important. These are stated to be the national origin and domestic habits of the first settlers of Pennsylvania; biography of William Penn, his family, and other settlers; biographical notices of eminent persons in modern times; aborigines of America; principles

to which is to be ascribed the rapid peopling of Pennsylvania ; general polity, revenues, and expenses of the colonial government ; judicial history ; medical history ; literary history ; agriculture, manufactures, and commerce. It is thus seen that the Society has given itself a great latitude of research, and that the zeal of its members need not flag for the want of suitable incitements. A separate committee, consisting of several gentlemen, is appointed for the investigation of each of these topics. Eleven years ago a committee of the American Philosophical Society of Philadelphia was formed, expressly for literary and historical purposes, and why it has been deemed necessary to create a new society for the same objects, and in the same place, we know not, nor do we think it a matter of any consequence, provided the activity and usefulness of both will be promoted by such an arrangement. It is to be feared, however, that by this division of forces the strength of the whole body will be weakened. There can be no question, in short, that much the greatest results would be produced by a union of the zeal and exertions of all parties. That no one can be associated with the Historical Committee, who is not a member of the Philosophical Society, is a very serious bar to the usefulness of that committee, and unless this obstacle could be removed, by some more liberal conditions of membership, the reasons perhaps were sufficiently cogent for setting up a new association on a broader basis. It is not to be supposed, that the persons most ardent in antiquarian and historical research, will always be the best qualified to belong to a philosophical society. Yet we think the president's language a little too strong, when he says in his inaugural discourse, speaking of the Committee, that 'the public looks on them with indifference.' To judge by the silence which they have maintained, since the publication of their first volume, seven years ago, it may be inferred rather that they are indifferent to the public, than that the public is indifferent to them. Another volume is understood to be in preparation, if not now ready for the press.

Besides the inaugural discourse of Mr Rawle, president of the society, the volume now under notice contains a memoir by Roberts Vaux, on the locality of the famous treaty between William Penn and the Indians ; notes on the provincial literature of Pennsylvania, by Thomas I. Wharton ; and a memoir on the controversy between William Penn and Lord Baltimore, respecting the boundaries of Pennsylvania and Maryland, by James

Dunlop. These are all judicious tracts, and throw as much light as could be expected or desired on the points of history, which their authors attempt to discuss.

Among other things Mr Rawle goes into an elaborate argument, to prove the rights of the aborigines to the soil of this country, and to show that these rights were as valid, and gave the Indians as strong claims, as in a more advanced stage of civilization. On this topic we do not fully agree with him, believing his reasoning to be more refined than practical. It is true in general, that what is right in one sense is so in another; but there are such things as conditional rights, and we apprehend this case of the Indians to be one of that description. 'A right to the soil depends on the mode by which possession was acquired,' says Mr Rawle; 'it is only by military conquest, or voluntary cession that the rights of the original occupants are divested.' Now in our view there is a previous question to be disposed of. What was the nature of the right by which the Indians held possession? Was it the right of occupancy? Doubtless it was, as far as the European settlers were concerned, for no other proof of right could be exhibited by the Indians; nor would any other be required to make the right unconditional and indisputable, in all cases where the inhabitants bore any proportion to the quantity of land they claimed. But to argue seriously, that a handful of savage people has a right to retain exclusive possession of as much land as it can wander over, during the four seasons of the year, in pursuit of game, and reject all other people from this domain, is carrying the metaphysical side of the question a little too far. Mr Rawle goes back to Adam, and says that to him was given 'dominion over the earth,' and adds, that 'dominion thus became a quality incident to rational existence.' Take this for granted, the question then occurs, How much dominion? Every human being undoubtedly has a natural right to soil enough to procure his subsistence, but here his natural right ends. If he possesses more, it must be by some conventional or conditional right. The laws of nations have recognised the rights of conquest and purchase, the first chiefly from necessity, and the second from convenience. Hobbes believed the foundation of right to be in the superiority of strength, Puffendorf in that of excellence. But take it as you will, the dimensions of the Indian rights become very scanty. As to the dubious right of conquest, we know not enough of their history to say anything on the subject; they made no pre-

tensions to purchase ; they were few in numbers and comparatively feeble in strength ; and for mental or moral excellence they were not distinguished.

Where then is the validity, or sacredness of the Indian rights, which rendered it unlawful for the inhabitants of other regions to settle in the wilderness, which the Indians did nothing to subdue, or to draw nourishment and riches from the soil, which they left desolate and barren ? Did the first Indian, who stepped upon the western continent, actually possess in fee simple one half of the globe, and had he a *right* to exclude all the rest of the world from his hemisphere, if such were his will and pleasure ? Was this ‘dominion incident to his rational existence ?’ It is presumed not. Had another man arrived a month later, he would have been as legitimate and substantial a proprietor of the hemisphere, as the first settler. The same may be said of ten, or twenty, or a hundred. The reason is, that as yet they possessed nothing by a conventional right, and no individual by his natural right could claim more than was sufficient for himself, and those immediately dependant upon him. As the people multiplied, and property increased, conventional rights grew up with the advancement of society, existing in different degrees according to the progress of civilization, and the recognised rules of social and civil order. When the Europeans came first to these shores, had the native population been dense, the country covered with villages and cultivated fields, the streams and bays filled with commerce, had manufactures and the arts flourished, and had an immensely increased value been given to the soil by the labor and skill of men, there would then have been in the condition of the people all the constituent qualities of a perfect right, whether regarded as the right of nature, superior strength, excellence, or purchase. Encroachments then would have been unlawful, because civilization had stamped the mark of property on every foot of land, and every other desirable object of possession.

But the case, as it stood with the Indians, was as different from this as possible. They were found here in the midst of a wide wilderness, scattered over a vast tract of country, savage in their habits and manners, paying no attention to agriculture or any of the arts of civilized life, roaming from place to place, and exhausting their whole powers of mind and body in gaining a precarious subsistence by the chase, and waging bloody wars with each other. To all appearance they had been here for centu-

ries, without advancing a single step in the road of human improvement. This applies we believe with strict accuracy to all the Indian tribes north of Mexico. Now to suppose that such a people had a right to this whole continent, or to any large portion of it, by which they might justly and forcibly exclude foreigners, who were peaceably seeking an abode in some corner of the same wilderness, is in our view to misapprehend the true nature of aboriginal rights, and to overlook the wise and beneficent designs of Providence, as seen in the progress of human affairs, and the government of the world.

Thus far we have been speaking of right; but when we come to the facts of history we shall not differ from Mr Rawle and others, whose warmth of sympathy in the cause of the Indians has been such, as the melancholy fate of that unhappy race is calculated to kindle. It would be in vain to attempt to justify the first settlers in many of their acts. If they had a right to a quiet occupancy of the soil, they had no right to wage unprovoked war against the natives, to drive them back, and seize the lands which they valued as being the dwelling place of their fathers, and on which the council fires had been lighted up for ages. The power of association, their reverence for tradition, as well as local causes, had chained them to spots from which they ought not wantonly to have been driven. Even the pilgrims at Plymouth landed in a hostile attitude under their military leader, Miles Standish. The first settlers seemed to have a contempt for the Indians, and to regard and treat them as possessing but few of the attributes of human beings. The Indians perceived this. They knew, moreover, that the whites practised deceptions upon them, overreaching and defrauding them whenever they could. They felt the indignity and injury, and it was natural that they should show resentment and seek revenge. Then followed fightings and bloodshed, with all the horrors and cruelties incident to savage warfare. Nine times in ten, we are convinced, these calamities were the direct consequences of the fanaticism, indiscretion, ignorance, or cupidity of the whites. A particle of wisdom, or of a knowledge of the savage character, with another particle of honesty, would have prevented the destructive wars, which at last nearly exterminated the red men, and for many years essentially retarded the prosperity of the whites. When we look back upon these scenes of our early history, and survey the picture they present, however much we may be shocked at the glaring atrocities of the barbarous natives,



we can find no apology for their intruding neighbors, who provoked these atrocities, and whose duty and policy it was rather to conciliate and soothe, than stir up and inflame the wild passions of uncivilized men. They drove the Indian to his ruin, but they nerved his arm with revenge, and brought a blow down upon their own heads, from the deep effects of which they did not soon recover.

It is consolatory, however, in running over these dark records in the annals of our forefathers, to light upon some brighter spots, which show their character to better advantage. The fame of William Penn has derived much lustre from his friendly, peaceful, and honorable mode of treating the Indians, in making all his acquisitions by fair purchase. The praise of this conduct has perhaps been too generally considered as exclusively his. A most valuable part of Mr Rawle's discourse is that, in which he examines the early history of the colonies, with direct reference to this subject. It appears that in all the colonies, from the time of their first settlement, purchases of lands from the Indians were frequently made. Belknap speaks of purchases at Plymouth, and as early as 1629, a company of persons from Massachusetts purchased of the Sagamore of Penacook, and other chiefs assembled at Squamscot falls, a tract of land, for which a regular deed of conveyance was obtained, 'with the universal consent of their subjects, for what they deemed a valuable consideration in shirts, coats, and kettles.'\* Morton says, that the lands at Plymouth were a donation to the first settlers by Massasoiet, king of the country. Purchases were afterwards made from him, but by the following passage, quoted by Mr Rawle from Hutchinson, it would appear that the terms were not always unexceptionable. In speaking of king Philip, it is observed by Hutchinson, that 'although his father had at one time or other conveyed to the English all that they were possessed of, yet Philip had sense enough to distinguish between a free, voluntary covenant, and one made under duress.' And afterwards the general court of Massachusetts urged a claim to the Pequot country by right of conquest.

Several purchases were made in Connecticut, particularly of the Pequots by Lord Say and Seal, and of others by John Mason. We cannot forbear in this place to quote Mr Rawle's short description of the brave and lofty spirited Pequots. We think it discriminating and just.

\* Belknap's New Hampshire, Vol. I. p. 11.

‘ The Pequots were a highminded race ; the only nation which, in that part of the world, had refused to pay tribute to the imperial Mohawks ; they knew and valued their own rights, they foresaw the ruin that impended on their national existence by the introduction of a superior class of beings, armed with destructive weapons, and eager to use them. The praises due to patriotism and courage, the admiration we bestow upon ancient nations, who hazarded everything in defence of their rights, their liberties, and their soil, should not be withheld from the Pequots. Like the Carthaginians, they have no historians of their own. We take their history, and our impressions of their character, from the pens of their enemies, their oppressors and ultimate destroyers. If we find them soon afterwards engaged in a severe and bloody war with the English, we are not thence to infer, that the Pequots were the aggressors.’ p. 60.

It has been the fate of all the tribes to be like the Carthaginians, in having their history written by their enemies. Could they now come up from their graves, and tell the tale of their own wrongs, reveal their motives, and describe their actions, Indian history would put on a different garb from the one it now wears, and the voice of justice would cry much louder in their behalf than it has yet done.

In pursuing his inquiry into the origin of titles to Indian lands, Mr Rawle finds that the same amicable and equitable mode of purchase was adopted by the Dutch in New Netherlands, and by others to a certain extent in New Jersey, and on the Delaware river ; and particularly by the Swedes on the western bank of that river in 1637. In Virginia, the Carolinas, and Georgia, there is ample testimony of titles having been acquired by purchase. The result of Mr Rawle’s inquiries, in relation to this subject, is on the whole more favorable to the whites, than has commonly been supposed. Whatever aggressions may have been committed by them, and it is well known that these were neither few nor small, the proofs are incontestible, that numerous purchases were made in a peaceable manner before the time of Penn. And this may be said, without detracting anything from the high and just praise due to that distinguished philanthropist and legislator.

In Mr Vaux’s memoir, respecting the place in which the famous treaty between William Penn and the natives was ratified, he establishes the common opinion, by arguments as strong perhaps as the nature of the case will admit, that it was on the bank of the

Delaware in Kensington, the northern suburbs of the present city of Philadelphia, under a large tree, which was to be seen there till 1810, when it was uprooted by a storm. A vague notion has gone abroad, that this treaty was formed farther down the river, at the Uplands, the present site of Chester. Other places have claimed this distinction, as did the Grecian cities the honor of being the birthplace of Homer, but the testimony is in favor of the great elm tree in Kensington. The following extract from a letter on this subject, by the venerable Richard Peters, dated September 6, 1825, will be read with interest.

‘It appears that the seat of Penn’s government was first established at Upland, or Chester; where several of his letters are dated. Now I have always understood that Talks with the Indians, preparatory to a final arrangement by a conclusive treaty, were held at Upland, or Chester. But it is almost indisputably probable, if general tradition did not confirm the fact, that William Penn chose to hold this treaty beyond the reach of any jealousy about the neighborhood of fortified places, and within the lines of his province, far from such places; and at a spot which had been an Indian settlement, familiar to, and esteemed by, the natives; and where neither Swedes nor Dutch could be supposed to have influence; for with them the Indians had bickerings. This view of the subject gives the strongest confirmation to the tradition of the treaty being held at Kensington; and the tree, so much halloved, afforded its shade to the parties in that important transaction. The prudent and necessary conferences, or talks, preparatory to the treaty; if any vestiges of them now remain, may have given the idea that the treaty was held at Upland.

The name and character of William Penn, denominated by the Indians, Onas, was held in veneration, through a long period, by those who had opportunities of knowing the integrity of his dealings and intercourse, especially by the Six Nations, who considered themselves the masters of all the nations and tribes with whom he had dealings in his time, and his successors thereafter who adhered to the policy and justice practised by him. At Fort Stanwix, fiftyseven years ago, I was present when the Delawares and Shawanese were released by the Iroquois, or Six Nations, (originally five,) from the subordination in which they had been held from the time of their having been conquered. The ceremony was called “taking off the petticoat,” and was a curious spectacle. When I was adopted into the family of a Tuscarora chief, at the time of the treaty of Fort Stanwix, he made to me a speech, in the style used on such occasions, in which he assured

me of his affection, and added, that he was pleased with my being “one of the young people of the country of the much respected and highly esteemed *Onas*,” which means a *quill* or *pen*. He gave to me one of his names—*Tegochtias*. He had been a celebrated warrior, and had distinguished himself on expeditions, toilsome and dangerous, against the southern Indians. The feathers, and desiccated or preserved birds, called by the Indians *Tegochtias*, i. e. *Paroquets*, were brought home by the war parties, as *Trophies*. The feathers decorated the *Moccasins* (whereof I had a pair presented to me), mixed with porcupine’s quills in beautifully ornamented workmanship. If there be any thing in my Indian name of *Paroquet*, ludicrous in our estimation, I shall not be ashamed of it, when the great and good Penn, was denominated, not a whole bird, but merely a *quill*. My *moccasins* cost me an expensive return, in a present the ceremony required; but I considered the singular *honor* conferred on me, richly deserving remuneration; though, in fact, I was more diverted than proud in the enjoyment of the amusing and curious scene, and had no doubt but that this expected remuneration was an ingredient in the motive leading to my adoption. *My* nation is reduced, as is all that confederacy, to a mere squad, if not entirely annihilated; though at that time it (the confederacy) could bring three thousand warriors into the field.’ pp. 89—92.

Mr Wharton’s Notes on the literature of Pennsylvania contain curious facts, concerning the early history of that colony, which we recommend to our readers. It will be recollected, that this was the theatre of Franklin’s labors as a printer, and the place where the foundation of his great fame as a writer was laid. In connexion with his main subject, Mr Wharton has glanced occasionally at the literary condition of other colonies. He has drawn our attention to a remarkable letter of William Berkeley, governor of Virginia, to the Committee of the colonies in England, written in the year 1671, more than sixty years after the first settlement of the colony. The state of learning at that time in Virginia will be understood, by the closing paragraph of his letter. ‘The same course is taken here,’ he observes, ‘for instructing the people, as there is in England. Out of towns every man instructs his own children according to his ability. We have fortyeight parishes, and our ministers are well paid, and by my consent should be better, if they would pray oftener and preach less; but as of all other commodities, so of this, the worst are sent us, and we have few that we can boast of, since

the persecution in Cromwell's tyranny drove divers worthy men hither. Yet I thank God there are no free schools, nor printing. For learning has brought disobedience, and heresy, and sects, into the world, and printing has divulged them and libels against the best government. God keep us from both.'\* This extraordinary doctrine was uttered by a governor of one of the most powerful provinces in America, towards the close of the seventeenth century. Happily it accorded in nothing with the spirit of Penn, or of the descendants of the Pilgrims.

Mr Dunlop's Memoir, on the controversy respecting the boundaries of Pennsylvania and Maryland, involves a discussion upon which we have not room to enter. The author has been successful in elucidating a somewhat entangled point of colonial history, and placing it in an intelligible form before the reader, which has not been attempted we believe in any other treatise, drawn up expressly for the purpose.

Before closing these remarks, we are tempted to say a word more on the utility of Historical Societies. The importance of speedy exertions, in collecting the remnants of such scattered materials as we possess, and of securing them in safe and accessible depositories, needs not to be urged. Every day adds to the chance of their being destroyed or lost. Time besieges them with its wasting power, or the tide of oblivion rolls over them. Let them be brought together, arranged, and preserved according to their purpose and value, and be made fruitful sources of knowledge to future historians, and the efficient means of abridging their labors. The deeds of our forefathers, their early struggles and protracted sufferings, are themes worthy to be had in remembrance and deep reverence by those, who are enjoying the fruits of the vineyard, which they planted in perilous times, with such sacrifices of blood and happiness. To lay these up in the chambers of our memory, and transmit them as a choice inheritance to our children, is no more than a dictate of nature, confirmed by the example of all ages, and the first impulses of the heart. The patriots and heroes, who achieved our liberties, are equally to be held in honor, and the records of their great actions engraven on tablets, which time shall not destroy, nor

\* Chalmers' Annals, Book I. chap. 13. The first printing press introduced into any part of America, north of Mexico, was set up in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1638. Printing was introduced into Pennsylvania as early as 1686; and into Virginia about 1727.

accident mar. By a good history of the country only can this be effected, and such a history cannot be written, till the materials, of which it must be composed, shall be collected and made easy of access.

It should be the object of each Society to search out every printed volume, pamphlet, and document relating to the history of America, and such manuscripts particularly as come within the professed compass of its inquiries. A person, who has not examined this subject, would be surprised at the exceedingly small number of books in our public libraries, on the history of this country. Nothing is more rare in these collections, than a copy of many of the colonial histories. After we have mentioned the library of Harvard College, of the Athenæum and Historical Society in Boston, of the Historical Society in New-York, of the Philosophical Society and the city library of Philadelphia, and the library of Congress, we know not another, in which the whole stock of books relating to America may not be ranged in the corner of a single case. The collection at Cambridge is by far the most ample, and it is a poor compliment to our native zeal, that this was made principally by foreigners, and has been transferred from Hamburgh and Paris to its present station, by the munificence of two of our wealthy citizens. The library of Congress is remarkably deficient in this department, having gained no acquisitions since the purchase from Mr Jefferson, except of the new current books. If there be a library in the Union, which ought to be more rich than any other in works of this description, it is that belonging to the nation. The city libraries of Charleston and Baltimore are judiciously selected for general purposes, but as to American history they are meagre. In neither of them can be found a full set of the printed books, journals, and documents relating to the state of which it is the metropolis. You can learn more of the fabulous ages of Greece and Rome, or of the Saxon Heptarchy, than of America, in the greater portion of the public libraries in the United States. A few private libraries are well supplied with works on American history, one of the most copious of which is understood to be that of an eminent jurist in New Hampshire.

State libraries are established in some parts of the Union, under the patronage of the legislatures, as in North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey. This example is worthy to be imitated by all the states. If the representatives will cherish a proper interest in the subject, every important historical record

and paper in the states may soon be collected into these centres. The state library of North Carolina exhibits the rarest instance of *bibliomania*, probably, which has occurred on the western continent. Lawson's History of Carolina, a thin quarto volume, of small size and a good deal worn, was recently purchased by the library committee, at the sale of a private gentleman's books in that state, for the round sum of sixty dollars. The book was printed in London, 1718, and at the bottom of the title page we read, 'Price five shillings.'\* The state library at Harrisburgh,

\* The entire title of the work is as follows. 'The History of Carolina, containing the exact Description and Natural History of that Country; together with the present State thereof. And a Journal of a thousand Miles, travelled through several Nations of Indians, giving a particular Account of their Customs, Manners, &c. By John Lawson, Gent. Surveyor General of North Carolina. London. Printed for T. Warner, at the Black Boy in Pater Noster Row, 1718. Price five Shillings.' The volume consists of two hundred and fiftyeight pages, about one third of which is taken up with an account of the Indians.

At the close of his Introduction the author makes the following remarks. 'The merchants of Carolina are fair, frank traders. The gentlemen seated in the country are very courteous, live very nobly in their houses, and give very genteel entertainments to all strangers, and others, that come to visit them. And since the produce of South and North Carolina is the same, unless silk, which this place produces great quantities of, and very good, North Carolina having never made any trial thereof as yet, therefore I shall refer the natural produce of this country to that part which treats of North Carolina, whose productions are much the same. The Christian inhabitants of both colonies are pretty equal, but the slaves in South Carolina are far more in number than those in the North. I shall now proceed to relate my journey from this settlement to the other, and then treat of the natural history of Carolina, with other remarkable circumstances, which I have met with during my eight years' abode in that country.'

Accordingly he proceeds next to his Journal, which he opens thus. 'December the twentyeighth, 1700. I began my voyage for North Carolina from Charles Town, being six Englishmen in company, with three Indian men and one woman, wife to our Indian guide.' In this manner they journeyed, till they came, as the author expresses it, 'to Pamticough river in North Carolina, where, being well received by the inhabitants, and pleased with the goodness of the country, we all resolved to continue.' How long he continued we are not informed, but his work was not published till eighteen years afterwards.

A book was published in Dublin, in the year 1737, entitled, 'Natural History of North Carolina, by John Brickell, M. D.' which is remarkable for being an almost exact verbal transcript of Lawson's History, without any acknowledgment on the part of the author, or even a hint that it is not original. Periods and paragraphs are transposed; parts are occasionally omitted, and words and sentences here and there inter-

in Pennsylvania, contains many portly folios, in antique garb, presented by William Penn, among which are the best of the old English authors. To these have been added the standard works on politics, history, and legislation.

Printed journals, pamphlets, and documents relating to the Revolution, constitute another kind of historical matter, which should be speedily collected. It is an extraordinary fact, that in hardly a single state can be found, in any one place, a full copy of the journals and records of that state, during the period of the Revolution. In some cases the same may be affirmed of the proceedings of the first conventions, when the colonies began to take upon themselves the powers and the acts of self government, and when new constitutions were framed. The negligence in this respect is unaccountable. No doubt a few perfect copies might be obtained, by proper exertions, for although no individual may possess the whole, yet all the parts may be in the hands of several. It would be a worthy enterprise for any historical society to appoint a committee, for the express purpose of collecting a perfect copy of the printed journals of the conventions and assemblies, from the beginning to the end of the revolutionary contest. The unsettled state of the times may perhaps be considered the cause of the carelessness, which prevailed in preserving papers, whether printed or in manuscript.

Another desideratum of immense importance in a historical collection, is a perfect body of the statutes of all the colonies and states, down to the formation of the federal constitution. The various editions of revised laws are not enough, for it will often happen, that a law, which has been repealed, is more essential as a historical record, than half a score of others, which have been kept in force. At the period of the Revolution, particularly, the laws, which illustrated most strikingly the state and spirit of the times, were the very ones soonest out of date. The entire statutes are alone valuable for history, and we do not believe there is a library in the Union, which can boast of possessing these for more than one or two states at the utmost limit. Virginia is the only state, which has published its own laws in

polated; but, as a whole, a more daring piece of plagiarism was never executed. The fact that this volume was published by subscription, only nineteen years after Lawson's History, is presumptive evidence, perhaps, that this latter work, for reasons now unknown, had become so rare, as to render a detection of the plagiarism improbable. Both of the above works are in the Boston Athenæum.



anything like a perfect form. Hening's Statutes at Large, in thirteen volumes, is a work reflecting the highest credit on the wisdom and liberality of Virginia, as well as on the industry and good judgment of the editor. With the full body of the laws, printed in chronological order, are mingled historical illustrations. The work, indeed, has no parallel in any other state, in regard either to its origin and execution, its extent, or the mode of its publication. It was printed at the charge of the commonwealth, and we presume at a considerable pecuniary sacrifice, for it is sold at a price hardly adequate to the cost. The project was designed for public benefit, and in attaining this end it has been successful. The proceedings of the conventions of Virginia, at the beginning of the Revolution, have also been reprinted by order of the legislature.

It may not be out of place here to correct a prevalent error, respecting the first written *Constitution* in this country. It has been generally supposed, that the constitution of Virginia was the first, and in Mr Jefferson's letter to Major Cartwright, lately published in the biographical memoir of that veteran friend of liberty, he writes, 'Virginia was not only the first of the states, but I believe I may say the first of the nations of the earth, which assembled its wise men peaceably together to form a constitution, to commit it to writing, and place it among their archives, where every one should be free to appeal to its text.' In this paragraph there is a mistake, in respect to its main point, as will be perceived by referring to dates. The convention, which formed the constitution of Virginia, assembled on the sixth of May, and continued by adjournments till the fifth of July, 1776. But the constitution of South Carolina was adopted on the twentysixth of March preceding, *more than two months before that of Virginia*, at what was called the 'Second Session of the Second Provincial Congress,' which assembled at Charleston on the first of February.

The president of this congress was William Henry Drayton. On the eleventh of February, a committee was appointed to prepare a plan or form of government, as had been recommended by the continental Congress in the preceding November. Of this committee, Charles Cotesworth Pinckney was chairman, as would appear from the journal. A constitution was reported a few days afterward, which was discussed and amended from time to time, till it was finally adopted on the day above-mentioned. The constitution itself may be seen in the journal

of the second provincial Congress of South Carolina, printed immediately after the session. The same day on which this constitution was adopted, that is, March 26th, 1776, the officers of the new government were elected. John Rutledge was chosen president, or governor, and Henry Laurens vice president. From these facts, it is evident that the constitution of South Carolina was promulgated before that of Virginia, and, as far as we know, it was the first written constitution in America.

A primary object of historical societies should be to collect manuscripts, to publish the best of them, and preserve those of less value in such a manner that they can be consulted by the historian and curious inquirer. The country abounds with historical manuscripts, in the hands of individuals and in public offices. It is to be lamented, however, that few public colonial manuscripts remain. In some of the states, the early journals of the assemblies and of the councils have been kept unbroken, but it is a fact worthy of particular remark, that in very few of the states, in none certainly south of New York, can be discovered a vestige of the correspondence of the provincial governors, nor any of the unpublished state papers anterior to the Revolution. This can be accounted for only upon the supposition, that the governors took away with them all the papers of this description. The journals are barren in matters of history, exhibiting little more than a dry detail of the daily proceedings of the legislative and executive bodies. The journal of the Council of South Carolina, under the provincial government, amounts to forty manuscript folio volumes. These contain specimens of Indian eloquence, and occasional copies of letters. In Georgia there is very little to elucidate early history, but what there is, we have good reason to believe, has been thoroughly examined, and will be faithfully reported, by Mr Bevan, who is now engaged under the auspices of the legislature in writing a history of the state. North Carolina is not without materials for early history. Mr Francis Xavier Martin many years ago made preparations for writing a history of that state, but his project never came to maturity. Judge Murphey is engaged in the same undertaking. Williamson's history is very imperfect. In Virginia all the public records and papers were burnt in January, 1781, when the British took possession of Richmond under Arnold. Up to that date the offices are blank. Maryland was more fortunate, and its provincial records are well preserved. In Pennsylvania these continue without interruption from the first session of Penn's council,

down to the end of the old government. The journals of New Jersey were printed nearly, if not quite, from the beginning of the government.

But none of these sources is by any means fertile in the best materials. In short, the colonial history of America is shut up in the office of the Board of Trade and Plantations in England. The original papers are all there, and no tolerable history can be written without a free and full use of them. A copy of the entire mass of those papers, as far as they relate to this country, ought to be obtained and deposited in the national archives at Washington. The government is the proper organ for managing this business, and we can hardly imagine an act more honorable, or more indicative of wisdom, good sense, and patriotism, than an effort to procure such a copy, through our minister at London. It cannot be supposed, that the British cabinet will at this day have any objection to copies being taken of papers, relating solely to this country, especially when we consider the enlightened and liberal men of whom that cabinet is now composed.

There is much room for zeal in finding out and collecting manuscripts, at present in the hands of individuals, which have a direct bearing on the origin and events of the Revolution. This is the grand period in our national history, upon which future ages will look back with peculiar interest, and mark as a prominent epoch in the progress of mankind. The correspondence of the officers of the army, the first governors of the states, the delegates in Congress, and other leading men of the times, should be eagerly sought and rescued from the fate, which is impending over it. Much of this we know has already been lost, by the carelessness or indiscretion of the persons, into whose hands it has fallen. It will all gradually disappear, unless seasonably deposited in the safe keeping of some public body, where a perpetual watchfulness will be exercised over it.

The history of some private manuscripts has already been curious. Our readers will recollect, that two or three years ago a large bundle of letters was brought to light in a baker's shop in New York, which proved to be the private correspondence of Paul Jones. When Paul Jones left America for the last time, he committed to the care of his friend, John Ross, of Philadelphia, several packages of manuscript papers, consisting of letters, journals, and vouchers of his landed and other property in America. A power of attorney was afterwards sent to Mr Robert Hyslop, merchant of New York, to receive those packages in

trust for the heirs of Paul Jones. An agent came to this country and settled the pecuniary affairs, but the papers, on being examined, were allowed to remain in the hands of Mr Hyslop in trust, as undivided property belonging equally to all the heirs of Paul Jones. At length Robert Hyslop died, and the papers then fell into the hands of his executor, John Hyslop, baker in New York. This is a brief explanation of the somewhat singular circumstance, of papers of this sort having been discovered in a baker's shop. They were valuable, as containing the correspondence of some of the most eminent leaders of the Revolution.

Another remark we may add respecting the papers of Paul Jones. By his will he left all his effects to his two sisters, who resided at or near Dumfries, in Scotland, to be divided equally between them and their children, in as many shares as there were individuals in the two families, constituting his two sisters guardians of their respective children during their minority. In 1793, one of the sisters, and the husband of the other, went to Paris, to recover a debt due from the French government to Paul Jones, and took with them to Scotland, among other things, all the papers left by him. A division of the effects and papers was immediately made, by a gentleman appointed for the purpose, with the mutual consent of the parties, who bound themselves to abide by his decision. This gentleman pursued an extraordinary course in regard to the papers. He portioned them out in two parcels, by weight and measure, just as they happened to come to hand, without regard to their value or connexion. The two families resided for some time in Scotland, and when Dr Duncan, eight or nine years ago, prepared the short biographical sketch of Paul Jones, for the *Edinburgh Encyclopædia*, he appears to have had access to all the papers. Since that time a branch of one of the families has removed to America, and brought hither a part of the papers, all, it is presumed, which this branch had in its possession.

A few years ago, a niece of Paul Jones, who inherited from her mother the portion of papers that fell to her lot, made an overture to the Historical Society of New York to publish them. The negotiation was not successful, but the manuscripts were sent out to New York for inspection, where they now remain in the hands of an individual in trust for the owner. They are fair copies, collected into four volumes, the three first of which relate chiefly to the part the author took in the American Revo-

lution. The last volume is written in French, and is devoted wholly to his services in Russia. The contents of all the volumes are chiefly letters, and official papers, some of which have been published. To the first volume is prefixed a memoir of his life, but by what hand we know not. There is also a short narrative of the transactions in which he was engaged during the American war, but the substance of this is nearly the same as that, which he presented to the king of France. It is a mistake, however, which some way or other crept into the *Edinburgh Encyclopædia*, that Paul Jones has left anything, which can be properly called a memoir of his own life by himself. What is to be the destiny of these papers we are not informed, but they are obviously essential to any correct delineation of the life and character of Paul Jones.

In closing these hints, we cannot but repeat a suggestion made by us on a former occasion, that individuals, who possess manuscripts of public interest as affording materials for history, should deposite them in the archives of public institutions, where the chance of their being preserved will be much greater than in private hands. The example of Mr Richard H. Lee, author of the valuable biography of his grandfather, is in this respect worthy of the highest commendation. The numerous papers, which belonged to his grandfather, Richard Henry Lee, he has resolved to deposite in the library of the Philosophical Society at Philadelphia, and the papers of Arthur Lee he intends in like manner for Harvard College. Thus will these wise men, and warm patriots, speak to posterity through their writings, and the writings of their friends, which for many reasons it might not be expedient to publish in detail. As works of reference such collections will be invaluable to the historian ; and members of historical societies, and of similar institutions, cannot exercise their influence or their industry in a more profitable way, than in gathering up from every quarter materials of this kind.

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